

MOTHER'S BOYS.

Yes, I know there are stains on my carpet,
The traces of small, muddy boots;
And I see your fair tapestry glowing,
And spotless with flowers and fruits.

And I know that my walls are disfigured
With prints of small fingers and hands;
And that your own household most truly
In immaculate purity stands.

And I know that my parlor is littered
With many old treasures and toys,
While your own is in delicate order,
Unharmful by the presence of boys.

And I know that my room is invaded
Quite boldly all hours of the day;
While you sit in your room unmolested
And dream the soft quiet away.

Yes, I know there are four little beddies
Where I must stand watchful each night,
While you go out in your carriage,
And flash in your dresses so bright.

Now, I think I'm a neat little woman;
And I like my house orderly, too;
And I'm fond of all dainty belongings,
Yet would not change places with you.

No! keep your fair home with its order,
Its freedom from bother and noise;
And keep your own fanciful leisure,
But give me my four splendid boys.

THE ECCENTRIC BACHELOR.

F—was a living specimen of the typical old bachelor, a personage more often met with in the pages of fiction than in real life; lean and sharp visaged of aspect, crusty and cynical of temper. He was, moreover, an avowed oddity; one of the privileged class who, by virtue of this reputation, can do what others dare not without exciting surprise or giving offense; whose eccentricities are met with a shrug of the shoulder and the remark, "What else can you expect of an oddity like me?"

He was an unpopular man, receiving scant sympathy; yet capable, nevertheless, of kind and generous acts, performed on the condition that they were to be kept strictly secret and that he was never to be thanked for them. Won betide the recipient of a favor to whom it was brought home that he had mentioned the same to any one, or extolled the kindness of his benefactor! The unlucky might once detected in thus giving vent to his gratitude had taken the surest method of cutting himself off from further help. He never got another chance.

Our old bachelor enjoying, as we have said, the privileges of eccentricity, it excited no surprise when, on one occasion, after an absence from home, he wrote to inform his servants—an old couple who had lived with him for years—that he would be accompanied by a widow lady, who was likely to make a long stay in his house, and for whom apartments were to be got ready.

"And a pretty upset she'll make!" exclaimed the dismayed old housekeeper. "A fussy, middle-aged party, no doubt, ordering and interfering and wanting to have everything her own way; which she won't get, John, as long as you and I can prevent her. She'll be a clever madam if she gets her foot inside of my store-room while there's locks and bolts to keep her out, I can tell her!"

"Don't you make so sure," said John. The old man could not resist now and then teasing his helpmate as a little set-off against sundry nagging on the part of that good old lady. "Maybe it's a mistress of the house and of yourself that's coming to it. Them widders are great at wheedling. It's time, if the master is ever to marry, that—"

"Ah, stop your croaking now!" cried Mrs. John. This dire suggestion was too overpowering for her feelings.

The appointed day arrived, and when the cab drove to the door, the two old domestics, with very sour faces and their backs very much up, went to receive their master and his unwelcome guest. Their first glimpse of the latter showed them that they might have spared their fears and hostile intentions. Out from the cab, before their astonished eyes, sprang a girlish figure, whose bright, happy face contrasted curiously with her mourning garments.

"Mind the step, uncle!" ("Oh, his niece, she is!") she cried, tripping up to the hall door. "Don't trouble, please," with a smile to the old housekeeper: "that bag is too heavy for you to take; I'll carry it."

And when the stranger came down to breakfast next morning with a morsel of a cap perched on the top of her golden braids of hair ("not my idea of a widow's cap," said the dame to her husband; "and would you believe it, John, singing away like a bird while she was dressing!") she looked absurdly young; more like a girl in her teens than an experienced, "settled" matron.

The advent of his pretty niece made some change in the habits of the old gentleman. He had friends at dinner more frequently than of yore; and, in addition to the elderly ladies that formed his usual society, younger guests were invited, suited to the years of his visitor. With great amusement her uncle observed the attraction her comeliness and winning ways were for these. "Swarming round—like flies about a honey-pot! Scouting, I dare say, a fat jointure. All widows are supposed to be rich, and just because she is a widow, and for no other reason, making up to her, the fools!" This to himself with a cynical chuckle. Aloud: "Nice little woman, sir, that niece of mine. Plenty of good looks, but hasn't a sixpence—not a sixpence to bless herself with."

It was wonderful how the old house was brightened up by the presence of its blithe young inmate. But by no one was its pleasant influence more felt than by the domestics, who had vowed such hostility before her arrival. The old woman especially was devoted to her; loving her for her own sake as well as for the kindly help and good offices she was always receiving from the deft and willing hands of the young girl. In the store-room—that sacred retreat which her foot was never to invade—the latter was to be found on "company days" busy and happy as a bee; with sleeves tucked half way up her plump arms, her heavy crape skirts stowed away under one of the old lady's capacious holland aprons, and lappets pinned high over her head, while, laughing merrily at the queer figure she made of herself, she worked away at the cakes and sweets, taking a world of trouble off the poor housekeeper's hands.

"And so thoughtful she is, and gay; bless her," his wife would tell old John. "She'll come tripping up to me, and 'Now, do as you're bid,' she'll say playfully, forcing me down into my big chair. 'Sit down and rest, there's an old dear, and take your tea. I'm not going to let you do a turn more.' And then she'll work away, her tongue going all the time as fast as her fingers; running on about her mother and her home, her flowers and pets, dogs and birds, and what not, but never a word about husband or married days. And if I touch upon them, or ask a question, she'll get quite silent and strange-like in a minute, and turn off the subject as if it burned her. Perhaps for all she's so merry on the outside she's fretting for him that's gone, and can't bear to talk of him."

"Nothing of the sort!" cried old John. "Don't you go to think such stuff. She'd take a husband to-morrow; mark my words. And it's my opinion there's a young gentleman comes to this house that has a fairish chance. He's desperate sweet upon her. I haven't eyes in my head for nothing, and I see plain she doesn't dislike him, or hold herself up distant from him, as she does from others."

Old John was right. Matters were in due time so satisfactorily settled between the young couple that an appeal to the uncle was deemed expedient. The old gentleman received the announcement with a half-pleased, half-satirical grimace.

"Ha, I thought so!" he muttered. "But are you aware, my friend, that there is no money in the case? The lady hasn't a sixpence, and—"

"I know it," indignantly interrupted the suitor. "You have made that remark before. I want no fortune with my wife, my own being my love."

"Oh, spare your rapture, young sir. Not so fast! Don't be too sure of the prize; for when you hear what I have to tell you there may be perhaps a change in your views. I have no time to go into the matter now; come to-morrow and hear what will surprise you;" and the old gentleman went off, nodding back—malevolently the lover fancied—over his shoulder, and leaving the poor fellow in a state of most uncomfortable suspense and uncertainty.

What could this dark hint mean? and why was he not to make sure? Could it be possible there was any doubt, any mystery as to the demise of the beloved one's husband? He could not help calling to mind her confused and singular manner at times; a certain want of frankness; an evident embarrassment at any allusion to the past. The possibility of an obstacle made the young man realize, as he had not before done, how deeply his affections were engaged. He spent a miserable night, awaiting in vain conjectures and sleepless anxiety the tidings which the morrow might bring forth.

In order to explain matters it will be necessary to go back for some months previous to the arrival of the young lady at her uncle's house, as well as to change the scene from it to a country cottage in a remote part of England—the home of the widowed sister of the eccentric bachelor. In it we find him pacing up and down the small drawing room and listening to the querulous complaints that its occupant, a confirmed invalid, is uttering from the sofa on which she lies. "I think but little of my bodily sufferings," she is saying; "they cannot now last long. Every day I feel more plainly that the end is not far off, and my doctor tells me the same. The distress of mind that torments me is what is so hard to bear."

"And what may this be about, if I might ask?"

"The future of my child when I am gone. All I have, as you know, dies with me. She will be penniless, and the thought of what is to become of her, cast on the world without a home, haunts me night and day. It is too dreadful!"

"A girl—and young—and not bad-looking. Where's the fear? Somebody'll marry her. Men are such fools!"

The sick woman could not forbear a smile.

nursing me and tied to a sick-room, has made no acquaintance. It is killing me to see her young life sacrificed and to think of the future."

The mother's tears began to flow. Her hearer, never very amiably inclined toward the weaker sex, or at ease in its company, increased his quarter-deck peepings in much discomfiture as these symptoms of "water-works turned on" became apparent. His hurried steps soon subsided, however, to a steady march up and down the little drawing-room, while, with frowning brow and occasional chuckles, he seemed to be concocting some scheme. After a few minutes he came to a sudden halt before the invalid's sofa.

"Can the girl act?" he asked abruptly.

"Act? How do you mean? I—"

"Oh, you needn't look frightened, I'm not going to propose sending her to the Gaol or the Criterion."

"Well, except in the little make-believe plays and dressings-up that children delight in—all children are, I think, actors born." ("Ay, and men and women too," growled the cynic)—"except that sort of thing she has never seen or had any opportunity of acting. Why do you ask?"

And in reply her brother unfolded the plan he had been concocting—namely, that his niece, laying aside her "frippery and her trinkets and other girl's nonsense," was to put on the mourning garb and act the part of a widow, in which assumed character she was to come to stay with him in his London home.

"But I don't understand"—

"And you're not wanted to understand," he snarled. "It's my whim; and it may be for the girl's advantage, if she's willing, and can hold her tongue, I'll come back for her when she's ready. And I'll pay for her outfit. Crape and weepers! Ho, ho, ho!"

When her first surprise at her uncle's strange proposition was over, the young girl jumped eagerly at the prospect of a change from the dull home she never yet had left. She was young and spirited; at an age when love of variety and a longing to see the world and plunge into its unknown delights are natural. The playing the widow she thought would be excellent fun. There was a spice of adventure in it, and it would be like the private theatricals and acting charades she had read of and imagined so pleasant. The old gentleman's reason for wishing her to do so was a puzzle; but then who could wonder at anything he did? absurd oddity that he was! Perhaps it was to avoid having to provide a chaperon for her; he hated ladies so, and elderly ones especially.

The result of the scheme we have seen; and the scheme itself was what its originator proceeded to divulge to the would-be husband when that individual presented himself with considerable misgiving and agitation on the appointed morning.

"As the lady has not turned out to be what you took her for, is not, in fact, a widow, perhaps the whole matter may be off. A disappointment, no doubt," wound up the uncle with one of his grim chuckles; "but 'twas only right to tell you in time. Young man, if you can pardon the deceit, take her."

"Well," exclaimed the young man to his fiancée, when all things were cleared up and satisfactorily arranged, and the engaged pair were talking over the queer circumstance that brought them together, "I always knew your uncle was eccentric, but this surpasses anything I could have imagined of him."

HAVING read the story of James Rowe, the miner, who was nearly killed in an explosion at Virginia City, and who every night since the accident has dreamed of dying, the editor of the *Nevada Transcript* relates a much more curious experience of his own. When a boy, ten years ago, a gun accidentally discharging sent a load of small shot tearing into his right arm. The wounds were several months in healing, and ugly scars were left. A long time afterward he was describing the accident to a party of friends when one of them picked up an empty gun and, capping it, snapped the cap. To the ears of the narrator the sound was like that of a large cannon exploding in the room. He saw a bright flash and felt the horrible sensation of being shot at atoms. He fainted and, upon recovering consciousness, found a physician bending over him. He felt severe pain in his right arm. Examination showed that the new skin had broken, and that the wounds were bleeding as freely as at the time of the accident. About a year afterward he underwent a similar experience. As he was walking along the street he heard the report of a pistol-shot. Instantly he felt what seemed to be a ball crashing into his forehead. Horror-stricken he placed his hand to the supposed wound. Though he could find no mark upon his head, blood was dripping from his fingers. He looked at the scars and found that they were bleeding afresh. Since then he has dreamed repeatedly that he was a target for riflemen practicing at short range.

Gov. GRAY, of Iowa, when recently retiring from office said, "I am going home and going to work and earn a living. I am \$5,000 poorer to-night than when I came to Des Moines."

LITERATURE FOR BOYS.

The old-fashioned stories which the unhappy boys of the last generation read have been succeeded by the manly and fascinating criminal novel. In the old story-books it was assumed that truthfulness, honesty and obedience to parents were virtues, and that the Christian religion was not wholly devoid of merit. If these views were not directly taught in the juvenile literature of our fathers, at all events they were never directly or indirectly attacked. Boys could learn nothing from their story-books except preposterous platitudes—nothing that was of any practical use, or that tended to develop in them manly and brilliant traits. No such complaint can be made of the dime and half-dime novels of the criminal school which are now read by all our boys, either openly or secretly. In these delightful stories new forms of profanity and slang are taught in the most effective way. The pleasures of burglary and highway robbery, the manliness of gambling and fighting, and the heroism of successful lying, are set forth in what is regarded by youthful readers as glowing eloquence; while the great truths that all parents are tyrants, that all religious people are hypocrites, and that disobedience to fathers and teachers is obedience to the nobler instincts of juvenile nature, are sedulously taught. Such stories as these develop all that is manly and lawless in our boys, and teach them lessons that cannot fail to be of immense service to them in whatever criminal career they may adopt. There are a few old-fashioned people who denounce the new juvenile literature in unsparring terms; but that nearly all fathers approve of it is self-evident. They know that their boys are reading novels illustrative of the excellence of crime, but they make no effort to suppress that sort of literature, as they certainly would do did they disapprove of it. Nothing would be simpler than to drive those novels out of existence. All that it would be necessary to do would be to "Boycott" the news-dealers who keep them for sale. The truth evidently is that fathers either do not care what their boys read or that they have no fault to find with "Jack Harkaway" and the "Boy Burglars." It cannot be that respectable gentlemen who dislike crime, profanity and vulgarity willfully refuse to know what their boys are reading, or weakly hope that by some happy chance their reading will do them no harm.—*W. L. Alden, in Harper's Magazine.*

"THEIR STYLE UP HOME."

One of the members of the Michigan Legislature of 186—came down to Lansing wearing a coon-skin cap, a deer-skin overcoat and buffalo-skin overshoes, and he brought with him certain traits of character which at once singled him out from the bald-headed bankers, the bent-backed farmers and the gesticulating lawyers who were gathered to impose new burdens on the State. This particular member was named Rush, and, though he had nothing to say for the first few days, it was plain to see that he would show his hand when called. One day he arose and began speaking on a matter already disposed of, but the Speaker interrupted with:

"There is no question before the House."

Rush waited a moment and then continued his speech as if nothing had happened, and again the Speaker notified him that there was no question before the House. If the member heard he did not take warning, and this time the Speaker called out, with a sharp rap from his gavel:

"There is no question before the House!"

"There ain't, eh? Here we've been pegging in and fooling around for two whole weeks, and haven't even got a question before the House! Mr. Speaker, this isn't our style up home! Why, sir, I can name six one-horse men in town who'd get a question before this House in less than fifteen minutes, and here are over a hundred of us taking things as easy as if we had a sure job for six months. I move you, sir, that a committee be appointed to bring in a question right off now, and that we keep the blame thing right here until we scatter for home!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

There is an opinion prevalent that young ladies lose their presence of mind under circumstances of peril. This was not the case with a young lady of Buffalo, whose lover took her sleigh-riding, and began to propose just as his horses started to run with the sleigh. Being determined to have it over with, he got the question out at the moment the sleigh struck a mile-post. The girl was thrown high in the air, but as she came down she uttered a firm "Yes, Charlie," and then fainted.

An amateur of dramatic art introduced for the first time into the green-room was profuse in compliments to one of the actresses. "I have so long applauded you from the front," he said, "that I take the liberty of speaking to you, although you don't know me." "Really it doesn't matter," was the answer; "the elephant doesn't know all the people who feed him cakes."—*Paris Figaro.*

WHAT A VOLCANO CAN DO.

Cotopaxi, in 1833, threw its fiery rocks 3,000 feet above its crater, while in 1854, the blazing mass, struggling for an outlet, roared so that its awful voice was heard at a distance of more than 600 miles. In 1797, the crater of Tungurahua, one of the great peaks of the Andes, flung out torrents of mud, which dammed up the rivers, opened new lakes, and in valleys 1,000 feet wide made deposits 600 feet deep. The stream from Vesuvius, which, in 1337, passed through Torre del Greco, contained 32,000,000 cubic feet of solid matter, and in 1703, when Torre del Greco was destroyed a second time, the mass of lava amounted to 45,000,000 cubic feet. In 1760, Etna poured forth a flood which covered 84 square miles of surface and measured nearly 1,000,000,000 cubic feet. On this occasion the sand and scoria formed the Monte Rosini, near Nicholosa, a cone two miles in circumference, and 4,000 feet high. The stream thrown out by Etna in 1816, was in motion at the rate of a yard a day for nine months after the eruption; and it is on record that the lava of the same mountain, after a terrible eruption, was not thoroughly cool and consolidated for ten years after the event. In the eruption of Vesuvius, A. D. 79, the scoria and ashes vomited forth far exceeded the entire bulk of the mountain; while in 1660, Etna disgorged twenty times its own mass. Vesuvius has sent its ashes as far as Constantinople, Syria and Egypt; it hurled stones eight pounds in weight to Pompeii, a distance of six miles, while similar masses were tossed up 2,000 feet above the summit. Cotopaxi has projected a block of 100 cubic yards in volume a distance of nine miles; and Sumbawa, in 1815, during the most terrible eruption on record, sent its ashes as far as Java, a distance of 300 miles.

LINCOLN IN HOT WEATHER.

We went up-stairs and were taken to the door of a bedroom looking out on the Potomac flats; a cheery cry of "Come in!" in a great, strong voice answered the Senator's rap, and I was vis-a-vis with the first President I had ever met. It was a broiling, breezeless summer day, and the sole occupant of the room, divested of coat, vest, cravat, collar and shoes, sat in a great rocking-chair, in his shirt, trousers, stockings and loose slippers, "only these and nothing more." As he rose and came to meet us, I looked at him with surprise and wonder, for he was the most remarkable man I had yet seen; and I don't think I have seen such a one in all my journeyings since.

As he talked he became excited, and rocked nervously and vigorously in his chair, and his long, lean leg, crossed over the knee of the other one, swung backward and forward like a pendulum. And, finally, from the violent swinging, off flew his slipper into the corner of the room. Never heeding it, he crossed the other leg instead, and went on with his ardent expression of feeling, in which Bingham joined, while I (as became my place) sat by, silent, but much interested and amused. Presently off flew the other slipper, and the conversation closing soon after, Mr. L. rose and ushered us to the door with just three garments on his immensely long person!

But he was, of all men, the most independent of the effect of clothing or of outward appearance. Had he been clad in skins, one would have been impressed with his greatness by seeing and hearing him for half an hour. For he was an uncrowned King, a man among men, *Primus inter pares*, greatest among all the great men of his age.—*Reminiscences in the Detroit Free Press.*

The colleges in this country are conducted on two different theories. The older ones, like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth and the like assume that the faculty are the guardians of the pupils, standing in place of their parents and responsible for their personal and moral education, outside as well as inside of the class-room and college grounds. The other colleges, like the University of Michigan and Cornell, while not wholly relaxing the paternal authority, do not emphasize it, but are disposed to reduce it to the narrowest limits. Whatever may be the influence of these two theories upon the individual student, the effect upon the collective student does not differ much. Violations of civil law occur under both administrations about equally, and alike in both colleges the student, when acting in his collective capacity, cannot be distinguished from any other rowdy. In Princeton he tears sidewalks up and signs down, breaks street lamps and removes gates. In Williams he goes to theatrical and musical entertainments, and with horns and whistles brings them to an ignominious end. In Cornell the Sophomores break into the room of two Freshmen, thrust them into a hack, drive to Syracuse and put up at a hotel until arrested by the police, when they profess to believe that kidnapping is a "joke." The Princeton students were fined for their conduct, the police attempted, but failed, to arrest the Williams College students, while it is proposed that the law shall deal with the Cornell law-breakers as if they were ordinary offenders.

PLEASANTRIES.

"This is rather up-hill work," said the patient, when he threw up the doctor's bolus.

The "fours of habit," said the gambler, softly, as he dealt himself all the aces in the pack.

A Boston doctor says high-heeled shoes ruin the eyesight, and yet he cannot be persuaded to look the other way. "At what age were you married?" inquired one matron of another. "At the parsonage," demurely answered her friend.

The army worm got as far as Boston when a miss with eye-glasses called it by its real name. It immediately laid down and died.

"TALKING ON THE NORTH POLE" is the caption of an article in an exchange. Should think he would resemble a jumping-jack in that position.

An experienced observer was once asked, "What is the art of winning a woman?" and answered: "About the same thing as the art of driving a pig to market."

"Why does a donkey eat thistles?" asked a teacher of one of the largest boys in the class. "Because he is a donkey, I reckon," was the prompt reply.

In the mountains—Arabella (whose soul is wrapped in science): "Charles, isn't this gnass?" Charles (who is deeply interested in Arabella): "Nice! It's delicious."

SOME ingenious observer has discovered that there is a remarkable resemblance between a baby and wheat, since it is cradled, then thrashed, and finally becomes the flower of the family.

The Marquis of Bute started a daily paper in Wales, and, after sinking about \$400,000 in the concern, shut up the shop. As a Marquis he is all right, but in journalism the Bute is on the other leg.

A PROFESSOR of French in an Albany school recently asked a pupil what was the gender of academy. The unusually-bright pupil responded that it depended on whether it was a male or female academy.

TWO WELL-DRESSED ladies were examining a statue of Andromeda, labeled "Executed in terra-cotta." Says one, "Where is that?" "I am sure I don't know," replied the other, "but I pity the poor girl, wherever it was."

Will some one who is versed in the science of sound please get up and explain why a hotel waiter, who can't hear the call of a hungry man two feet and a half away, can hear the jingle of a quarter clear across a dining-room?

"WHERE would we be without women?" asks a writer. It's hard to determine just which way the majority would drift, but some men would be out of debt and out of trouble, and a good many others would be out at their elbows.

MOTHER seeking a situation as footman for her rawboned son, Lady—"Does he know how to wait at table?" Mother—"Yes, ma'am." Lady—"Does he know his way to announce?" Mother—"Well, ma'am, I don't know that he knows his weight to an ounce, but he does to a pound or two."

DURING the examination of a witness as to the locality of the stairs in a house, the counsel asked him, "Which way did the stairs run?" The witness, who, by the way, was a noted wag, replied that "One way they ran up, and the other way they ran down." The learned attorney winked both eyes, and then took a look at the ceiling.

A FISHERMAN spread his net one day, and cast it into the sea. And when he drew it out, they say, 'Twas as full as a net could be. But the little fish got through holes in the net, And scampered in joyousness home, While the big ones were taken in out of the wet And hurried away to their doom. And thus it is happening every day. Whenever a trap is set; We little fish always get out of the way, While the great are held fast in the net.

A POLITE PEOPLE.

The city of Lucknow, India, is renowned for the politeness of its people, exceeding, it would seem, that of the French, who are generally regarded as the politest people in the world. A correspondent, writing from the spot, gives a ludicrous illustration of the extent to which the natives carry their ideas of courtesy. Two native gentlemen, on their way to the railway station, accidentally fell into a ditch. One would suppose that both would have been on their feet in a twinkling; but no, the law of politeness interfered, and one said to the other: "When your Honor rises then I may get up." "No, your Honor should get up first," replied the other. "Never; how could I take precedence of your Honor?" and thus the contest went on for an hour, it is said, because neither gentleman would consent to violate the laws of good breeding.

ACCORDING to official statistics the number of Germans who emigrated to America in 1881 was 245,898, or nearly a quarter of a million. This is the highest figure since 1872, when it was only 254,824. In 1877 it had sunk to 41,749. Within the last ten years Germany has lost about 1,250,000 of her subjects by emigration.